

Orthodox Baha'is

From: Ahang Rabbani

<ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Brent and Vickie Poirier <mariposa@newmexico.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney <attorney@cybermesa.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney at Law <attorney@newmexico.com>, Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

Dear Brent and Susan,

This is a note that I received from some Baha'is in Tehran (all names have been removed). I don't follow activities of Orthodox Baha'is at all, nor am I sure what action the writers of this note is urging.

But I know that you have considerable expertise in this subject. Can you put together a piece on this? You can post it anywhere you like, including Iran Press Watch.

If you like to forward this request to others with similar expertise, please feel free to do so.

Should a blog be created to response to Orthodox Baha'is and their accusations (whatever they may be)? Is there an existing one that you'd recommend?

thanks in advance,

Ahang.

----- Forwarded message -----

From:

Date: Mon, Jan 5, 2009

Subject: Important, please read it.

To: ahang.rabbani@gmail.com

Cc:

Dear Dr Rabbani,

recently the activities of a group called "Orthodox(!) Baha'is" have grown and reshaped.

Their third guardian(!) has introduced the 4th one, an Iranian Covenant breaker, and I think the Iranian Baha'is will be involved in more mental trials and difficulties very soon.

Last day I was searching the internet for recent researches on "Abd'u'lBaha's Will and Testament". But much to my surprise I found that among 10 websites 8 were founded by the so-called orthodox baha'is.

Although it is not unlikely that the Islamic regime is itself instigating them and worsening the situation for the purpose of disintegrating the Baha'i community.

As a scholar and researcher, can you do something for it?

With Baha'i love,

Tehran, Iran.

--

From: Brent Poirier Attorney

<attorney@cybermesa.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

Cc: Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

Dear Ahang and Susan:

First, all three of the email addresses reached me. I likely will keep all of these addresses for as long as I'm on this earthly plane.

As to the Orthos. I remember reading a couple of years ago, where Nima Hazini, in one of his few recent cogent moments, was mocking them because their "guardian" and "interpreter of the Word of God" (Marangella) was incapable of reading the Word of God in the languages of revelation. I think it is because Marangella was stung by this criticism that he named a Persian to succeed him. He's at least 95 years old by now. It will be very interesting to see what happens to his group when he moves to his next, always over-heated residence; and whether his recently-appointed "hands of the cause" turn on one another. It's my personal view that he's the most dangerous Covenant-breaker in the world right now. As the House wrote, he has pretty much given up on interacting with the world at large, and is focused on picking off a Baha'i here and there. One of his successes was Jeff Goldberg, who was expelled from the US Baha'i community about a decade ago. He's an attorney, and has moved to I think Albuquerque, and represented Marangella in the recent lawsuit with our NSA (which is pending on appeal).

I spoke with ITC Counsellor Stephen Hall three weeks ago at the Connecticut conference, and if I understood him correctly he said that the current recommended approach is to not do a point-by-point response to the Covenant-breakers, but rather to simply provide accurate information so that the friends can put 2 and 2 together. I infer that a more detailed approach would expose the friends to Covenant-breaker material and also put too much attention on these groups.

When I was an ABM and was instructed by Counsellor Birkland to summarize Marangella's website for him, I got only partway through, and my comments to him were quite lengthy. Marangella's approach is so detailed, and there are so very many "points" that it would take a lengthy book to reply to each one of them from this man who is tragically inventive with both the Word of God and human logic. "Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated." I would not want to go through that stuff again, and only did so at a Counsellor's instructions.

And your inquirer is correct, the enemies of the Faith build on one another, and it is common in this recent spate of Muslim anti-Baha'i websites to quote from Covenant-breaker material; any mud will do.

As to whether the Persian friends will encounter more tests, I obviously can't say for sure, but I doubt that Marangella's drivel will attract much interest from well-informed, steadfast believers. It is no secret to the Institutions of the Faith that this Persian fellow is waiting in the wings. I cannot say whether they share the concern of this believer in Tehran that this signals an increased focus on the Persian friends. Right now I think their only significant numbers, which are I think mostly in the dozens, are in the USA, Australia and India. I could be wrong, but that's my impression.

I am presently, with a believer in Australia, working on a course on the Covenant that will be offered on-line at no charge. It will cover a lot of ground, and while it is not going to be apologetic in tone, it will be in Q & A format with challenging questions, and intended to be in a form that the friends can use the Writings on the Covenant to clearly understand the true picture, and to use the Writings effectively in responding to challenges. He and I went to France 2 months ago and filmed Mr. Nakhjavani over the course of a week and came back with 10 or 12 hours of video of him answering questions on the Covenant, and these will be the main attraction to draw people into the course. We are contemplating setting it up so that people can upload their own comments, even their own videos, in discussing these points. There is also new software this believer has developed (he has a PhD in computer science), to help engage the reader in a deeper sort of analysis, not a memorize-and-repeat approach, but one that makes them think and come up with their own approach. It will be a lot of work, and is my primary Baha'i work for 2009, and we hope to have it up and running in the first part of 2010. I did a course on the "Three Covenants" for the Wilmette Institute last year -- the Covenants of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and the Master, and this compilation and approach is the starting point for the content that will go into the course; basically a compilation + stories from the Hands + questions for study and response + scenarios to respond to + photos. It may not make much of a ripple, but maybe one day the material will be of use; and of course Mr. Nakhjavani's comments will have enduring interest and effect.

But as Counsellor Hall pointed out, very soon Ruhi Book 8 will be out. It is published in draft form and is being tested in various areas, and I heard from someone that it is 200 pages long. And it will be the primary learning tool on the Covenant for the Baha'i world, so this course will be a supplement, and may well cover more details than the Ruhi course will, but when everybody's studying Ruhi 8 I am not at all sure what the role of this will be. But, it's good material, and we promised to put it out there as a legacy for Mr. Nakhjavani, so we're following through.

In the past, with few exceptions, when I dealt with internet issues and Covenant-breakers, the approach I was told by Counsellors to use, was as I said above -- providing correct information rather than a direct response to challenges.

And I have no idea what other believers may also be working on, in the same field.

My suggestion is that you write to the Baha'i Internet Agency and if my impression is accurate -- offer your concerns that the "4th Guardian" may have in mind an increased attention to the Baha'is in Iran, with any recommendations. I am keeping that agency, and

through it the ITC, apprised of what we're doing, and right now there's not much of a response other than encouragement and to go for it, and when it's ready at an experimental stage they'll take a look at it and may have recommendations then, and that there may be additional guidance from the House of Justice about defense of the Faith from Covenant-breakers at some point in the near term.

And I've gone into a lot of detail here for you two friends, more than I normally would, and would rather that my reply not be forwarded to the believers in Tehran, this goes far further than the original inquiry was. The reason is that I do not want my personal impressions of what the Teaching Center and the House wants done, to color what anybody else feels they should do. The friends should contact the institutions themselves and get their focus and direction straight from them, and for web-based approaches, the BIA is a good place to start.

Brent

Ahang Rabbani wrote:

Dear Brent and Susan,

This is a note that I received from some Baha'is in Tehran (all names have been removed). I don't follow activities of Orthodox Baha'is at all, nor am I sure what action the writers of this note is urging.

But I know that you have considerable expertise in this subject. Can you put together a piece on this? You can post it anywhere you like, including Iran Press Watch. If you like to forward this request to others with similar expertise, please feel free to do so.

Should a blog be created to response to Orthodox Baha'is and their accusations (whatever they may be)? Is there an existing one that you'd recommend?

thanks in advance,

Ahang.

Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney
<attorney@cybermesa.com>

Ahang,

Somehow this didn't make it to you. But I was wrong about Joel M.

successor who I confused with Soghomonian's. Soghomonian's successor

is one of the original Covenant breakers, I think and a very old man.

Soghomonian tried to appoint a younger Persian earlier but no one

could get along with him so he withdrew the appointment. It was apparently Brent Mattheiu's (who had participated on Talisman) that a Persian be appointed. At one point Brent had been offered the Guardianship himself and he turned it down saying a Persian should be appointed.

Joel M's appointment Nosrat, seems to be a relative newcomer to the scene. He may not be that old but I don't think there are any Persian 'back-ups' like the Soghomonians have.

warmest,

Susan

Dear Ahang and Brent,

As it turns out *both* Remeyite groups (the Orthodox and the followers of Soghomonian) appointed Persians to succeed them and I think Brent is right this is a result of having been mocked on Talisman for having an interpreter who couldn't actually read the Writings. But Marangella's successor is very old himself, having sat on that French NSA that had to be dissolved because so many became Remeyites. One of the things that came out of the recent court case, by the way, is the fact that there are only about 30 members of the Orthodox Baha'i Faith in the US, so we are not talking about a significant group. What I would suggest you do, besides consultating the BIA, is get the article on *Mason Remey and those who followed him* from off of Jonah's website and translate it into Persian. In the meantime, I'll look through my archives and see if there is anything I've written on the Remeyites and their claims which might be useful to you.

warmest,

Susan

Brent Poirier Attorney

<attorney@cybermesa.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

Cc: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

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Susan I note that you are subscribed to the Orthodox Baha'i Facebook group. Is this so you can keep tabs on what they're doing? Or so you can set the unwary straight? Interesting ...

Brent

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Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009 at 4:53 PM

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

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Dear Ahang,

You might want to get my article **The Pharisaic Phenomenon** translated since I talk about Mason Remey a good deal there. Also, if they can come up with specific questions I can certainly answer them. I hate to introduce people to arguments they haven't yet heard however.

warmest,

Susan

Ahang Rabbani

<ahang.rabbani@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

Would you happen to have a scan of it, or is online? Getting it translated is relatively easy.

I don't think they know enough about the subject (nor do I), to ask good questions. I had forgotten about that letter of the House on this topic and that might a way to bring these friends up to speed.

One possibility might be that their real worry is that the Iranian government will use the Orthodox Bahais and would try to promote them as alternative (even legitimate) Baha'is. I think they might be trying to get ready for that eventuality.

Thanks again,

Ahang.

Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

> Would you happen to have a scan of it, or is online? Getting it translated
> is relatively easy.

Dear Ahang,

It's right here on my website: <http://pharisaic.susanmaneck.com/>>

How 'official' is this request? I have enough material that I could certainly write something up. (In English, of course) but I think I'd want to consult with the BIA first.

warmest,

Susan

Ahang Rabbani

<ahang.rabbani@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

I

Dear Susan,

I have no idea how "official" it is. In fact, I have no way of gauging it. The quality of English was far better than you typically see coming from Iran, so that got me thinking but I don't know what that means.

So please check with BIA and share with them whatever of my emails you like.

If at the end you decided to write something, please let me know too.

Thanks, ahang.

Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

okay, will do.

Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Mon, Jan 5, 2009 at 11:49 PM

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

Cc: Brent and Vickie Poirier <mariposa@newmexico.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney <attorney@cybermesa.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney at Law <attorney@newmexico.com>

Dear Ahang,

Here's the response I received from the BIA:(Bahai Internet Agency)

"More direct responses to the claims of the Remeyites is now the subject of consultation at the World Centre. So it is best to hold off until we receive guidance--about overall strategy and tone, approach and method to be employed."

warmest,

Susan

Add star

Ahang Rabbani

<ahang.rabbani@gmail.com> Tue, Jan 6, 2009 at 4:48 PM

To: Susan Maneck <smaneck@gmail.com>

Cc: Brent and Vickie Poirier <mariposa@newmexico.com>, Brent Poirier Attorney <attorney@cybermesa.com>

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Thanks.

Earlier today, Kavian (of whoever ghost-writers for him) started a series on Remey on his blog in Persian:

<http://negahedigar1.blogfa.com/post-28.aspx>

I hadn't said anything to him about the recent request, but may be he had been approached by the friends in Iran directly.

Anyway, an interesting coincidence.

The point that he makes at the end though is new. He suggests that both CB groups now Persian leaders because the Iranian government is supporting these groups and collaborating with them, which has given them a new life.

Ahang.

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Susan Maneck

<smaneck@gmail.com> Tue, Jan 6, 2009 at 7:00 PM

To: Ahang Rabbani <ahang.rabbani@gmail.com>

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He suggests that both CB

> groups now Persian leaders because the Iranian government is supporting

> these groups and collaborating with them, which has given them a new life.

Persians and their conspiracies theories!

I find this very unlikely. It is the internet which gave the Remeyite

groups new life and it is because of our mocking them for not knowing

Persian that caused them to pick an Iranian successor. I know for a

fact this was the case with the Soghomonians (because I have inside

information as to their decision making process) and I suspect it is

true of the Orthodox Baha'is as well.